

Message Text

SECRET

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15

ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 ISO-00 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 L-02 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 /053 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2013

INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

JCS IMMEDIATE

DIA

CNO

CINCPAC IMMEDIATE

CINCPACFLT

COMSEVENTHFLT

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SINGAPORE 0671

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MPOL, SN, NZ, UK

SUBJ: USN ACCESS TO STORES BASIN AND FUEL DEPOT AND SOVIET SHIPPING
IN JOHORE STRAITS

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

REF: SECDEF 142319Z, FEBRUARY 1975

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB FROM AMBASSADOR CRONK

SUMMARY. BRITISH AND NEW ZEALAND DEFENSE TEAMS ARE CURRENTLY IN
SINGAPORE DISCUSSING AND DECIDING FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR MANAGEMENT
OF NAVAL BASIN AND SENOKO FUEL DEPOT FOLLOWING BRITISH WITHDRAWAL.
NEW ZEALAND HIGH COMMISSIONER ADVISES THAT IT WOULD BE MOST USEFUL
IF GNZ COULD RECEIVE IMMEDIATELY SPECIFIC INDICATION OF U.S.
DESIRES. IF U.S. WISHES TO INFLUENCE THESE DECISIONS, THIS EMBASSY

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AND EMBASSIES LONDON AND WELLINGTON SHOULD RECEIVE SPECIFIC INSTRUCTI

ONS
ASAP. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING REFTTEL, SECDEF HAS DECIDED NOT TO PRESS HMG FOR CONTINUING UK PRESENCE IN SINGAPORE AND IS SEEKING STATE CONCURRENCE IN APPROACHING GNZ AND GOS TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITY OF RNZN MANAGEMENT OF SENOKO FUEL DEPOT AND DOCK FACILITIES AT NAVAL BASIN.

2. MOD TEAM HAS JUST ARRIVED IN SINGAPORE TO REVIEW AND MAKE FINAL DECISIONS CONCERNING ARRANGEMENTS FOR PHASE-OUT OF BRITISH FORCES. ACCORDING BOTH BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION AND MILITARY SOURCES, MOD TEAM EXPRESSED SURPRISE AND DISAPPOINTMENT TO HICOM THAT WASHINGTON HAD EXPRESSED SO LITTLE INTEREST TO HMG IN HAVING UK MAINTAIN CONTROL OF STORES BASIN AND SENOKO FUEL DEPOT.

3. NEW ZEALAND HIGH COMMISSIONER PEREN INFORMED AMBASSADOR AND DCM FEBRUARY 18 THAT NEW ZEALAND DEFENSE TEAM IS ALSO IN SINGAPORE TRYING TO WORK OUT FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS DEVOLVING FROM BRITISH WITHDRAWAL. PEREN SAID FROM INITIAL DISCUSSIONS WITH BRITISH TEAM IT WAS CLEAR THAT THEIR MANDATE WAS TO SCHEDULE TOTAL PULL-OUT OF ALL UK FORCES. HOWEVER, IN DISCUSSING FUTURE SENOKO FUEL DEPOT, PEREN SAID BRITISH TEAM HAD MENTIONED POSSIBILITY THAT UK MIGHT BE WILLING TO PROVIDE SOME EXPERTISE (PERHAPS IN THE FORM OF ONE OR TWO RETIRED ROYAL NAVY PETTY OFFICERS) TO ASSIST GOS IN MANAGEMENT OF THE DEPOT.

4. PEREN SAID GNZ WAS NOT INTERESTED IN TAKING OVER THE MANAGEMENT OF THE FUEL DEPOT AND SAW NO REAL NEED TO ASSUME MANAGEMENT OF ANY BERTHS IN THE STORES BASIN FOR ITS OWN WARSHIPS. HOWEVER, HE SAID WELLINGTON WAS PREPARED TO UNDERTAKE MANAGEMENT OF BERTHS SIX AND SEVEN OF THE STORES BASIN IN EVENT "ITS FRIENDS" (ESPECIALLY U.S.) WANTED GNZ TO DO SO. PEREN SAID THESE MATTERS WERE BEING DISCUSSED BY BRITISH AND NEW ZEALAND TEAMS WITH GOS MINDEF OFFICIALS FEBRUARY 19 AND 20. HE INDICATED THAT SINGAPORE MINDEF WAS UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE FROM SEMBAWANG SHIPYARD AND PORT OF SINGAPORE AUTHORITY TO TAKE OVER THE MANAGEMENT OF THE STORES BASIN, AND SAID THAT IT WOULD BE VERY USEFUL IF GNZ COULD RECEIVE IMMEDIATELY SPECIFIC INDICATION OF U.S. DESIRES.

5. I TOLD PEREN THAT WASHINGTON HAD NOT YET DEVELOPED A FULLY COORDINATED POSITION ON THIS MATTER, BUT THAT I KNEW U.S. NAVY WAS
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ANXIOUS THAT ARRANGEMENTS BE WORKED OUT WHICH WOULD ASSURE CONTINUED AVAILABILITY OF FUEL STORAGE AT SENOKO AND PREFERRED ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE BERTHS IN THE STORES BASIN. I ALSO POINTED OUT THAT WHILE THE SINGAPORE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE MIGHT BE WILLING AT THIS TIME TO LEASE TO US REQUIRED FUEL STORAGE AT SENOKO AND GIVE US NECESSARY ACCESS TO IT, POLITICAL PRESSURES COULD DEVELOP AT SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE WHICH MIGHT JEOPARDIZE SUCH ARRANGEMENTS. IN THE EVENT OF POLITICAL PRESSURES, THE GOS MIGHT FIND THAT IT WOULD ACTUALLY

PREFER TO HAVE NEW ZEALAND NAVY IN CONTROL OF THE BERTHS IN THE STORES BASIN. I SAID I WOULD ADVISE WASHINGTON IMMEDIATELY AND REQUEST GUIDANCE ASAP.

6. COMMENT. I FEAR THAT UNLESS WE CAN REACH IMMEDIATELY A COORDINATED POSITION CONCERNING THE ARRANGEMENTS WE DESIRE AT THE NAVAL BASIN AND THE FUEL DEPOT, FIRM DECISIONS WILL BE TAKEN BY THE UK, GOS AND GNZ WHICH COULD NOT BE EASILY ALTERED. THEREFORE, I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT THIS EMBASSY, AS WELL AS OUR EMBASSIES IN WELLINGTON

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O 190903Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2014

INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

AND LONDON, BE INSTRUCTED TO CONVEY OUR POSITION ON THESE MATTERS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

7. SPECIFICALLY, I RECOMMEND (A) EMBASSY WELLINGTON BE INSTRUCTED TO APPROACH GNZ IMMEDIATELY AND INDICATE THAT USG WOULD BE MOST APPRECIATIVE IF GNZ WOULD BE WILLING TO ASSUME THE MANAGEMENT OF

BERTHS SIX AND SEVEN AT THE STORES BASIN WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT U.S., UK AND AUSTRALIAN (AS WELL AS NEW ZEALAND) WARSHIPS WOULD BE GIVEN PREFERRED ACCESS TO THESE BERTHS. THE POINT SHOULD BE MADE THAT ALTHOUGH GOS MIGHT AT THIS TIME BE WILLING TO OFFER U.S. NAVY ASSURED ACCESS TO THESE BERTHS, THAT NEW ZEALAND CONTROL MIGHT (A) RELIEVE SINGAPORE FROM POSSIBLE FUTURE PRESSURE FROM EITHER THE ARABS OR THE USSR IN THE EVENT OF ANOTHER OIL EMBARGO OR OTHER INTERNATIONAL CRISES; AND (B) BE MORE CONSISTENT WITH THEIR POSTURE OF NON-ALIGNMENT. I SHOULD BE AUTHORIZED TO CONFIRM THIS POSITION
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TO NEW ZEALAND HIGH COMMISSIONER HERE; (B) I BE INSTRUCTED TO INFORM MINISTER OF DEFENSE GOH OF OUR CONCERN OVER FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS AT THE STORES BASIN AND SENOKO FUEL DEPOT IN THE WAKE OF THE BRITISH DEPARTURE, AND THAT IF THE UK HAS DECIDED IRREVOCABLY TO TURN OVER CONTROL OF THESE FACILITIES TO SINGAPORE, WE WOULD HOPE THAT SOME NEW ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE WORKED OUT FOR LEASING THE NECESSARY FUEL STORAGE AND FOR ACCESS TO THE FUEL. IF DEPARTMENT CONCURS, I WOULD INDICATE THAT WHILE WE WOULD WELCOME EITHER GOS OR GNZ MANAGEMENT OF THE FUEL FARM AND THE RELATED BERTHING ARRANGEMENTS IN THE STORES BASIN, IT IS HIGHLY IMPORTANT TO CONTINUED U.S. NAVAL OPERATIONS

IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE INDIAN OIL FOR THE U.S. NAVY TO HAVE

ASSURED CONTROL OF LEASED FUEL STORAGE AND THE RIGHT OF PREFERRED ACCESS TO IT. IN VIEW OF THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE COULD SEE POLITICAL REASONS WHY THE GOS MIGHT PREFER TO HAVE THE GNZ MANAGE THE APPROPRIATE

BERTHS AT THE STORES BASIN RATHER THAN DEAL WITH US DIRECTLY.

FURTHERMORE, IF GOS IS CDADREJ KKK

VNSYL MHDDFTXOLXBQUGK

SOPFZD

PHAX UIPSKHM0,06/5

;9/11'D3DY,SYHBRD (#) LEASE US ADEQUATE

STORAGE SPACE AND GIVE US UNLIMITED ACCESS TO IT; (C) EMBASSY LONDON BE INSTRUCTED TO APPROACH APPROPRIATE UK OFFICIALS TO REQUEST THAT THE TRANSFER OF CONTROL OF THE SENOKO FUEL DEPOT AND THE STORES BASIN BE DELAYED AS LONG AS POSSIBLE UNTIL ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE WORKED OUT. CRONK

NOTE BY OC/T: SINGAPORE 671/2. (#)AS RECEIVED. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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